

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 07551 172230Z

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 AGRE-00 CEA-01

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SUBJECT: MEETING OF ARGENTINE-SOVIET MIXED COMMISSION

REF: BUENOS AIRES 3464

1. A THIRTEEN MAN SOVIET TRADE DELEGATION LEFT BUENOS AIRES ON NOVEMBER 5 AFTER SPENDING A WEEK HERE PARTICIPATING IN THE SECOND MEETING OF THE SOVIET-ARGENTINE MIXED COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC-COMMERCIAL AND TECHNICAL-SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION. THE SOVIET DELEGATION WAS LED BY VICE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE, ALEXEI N. MANZHULO. THE TEXT OF THE DOCUMENT SUBSCRIBED BY THE PARTIES AT THE END OF THE TALKS INDICATES THAT VERY LITTLE WAS ACCOMPLISHED, THOUGH QUITE A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS WERE TOUCHED UPON, RANGING FROM THE FURTHERANCE OF TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION THROUGH THE POSSIBILITY OF A CIVIL AIR AGREEMENT.

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PAGE 02 BUENOS 07551 172230Z

2. SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED WAS THE PURCHASE OF OIL

DRILLING AND MINING EQUIPMENT FROM THE SOVIETS BY ARGENTINA; SATISFACTION WAS EXPRESSED THAT THE OIL EQUIPMENT PURCHASES WERE PROCEEDING APACE, AND A DECISION TO RENEGOTIATE THE CONTRACT FOR PURCHASE OF MINING EQUIPMENT BY THE STATE COAL COMPANY WAS NOTED.

3. ON THE CIVIL AVIATION SIDE, IT WAS AGREED THAT OVER THE NEXT 90 DAYS AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE WORKED OUT WHEREBY AEROLINEAS ARGENTINAS PASSENGERS DEBARKING AT FRANKFURT AND DESTINED FOR MOSCOW WILL BE ROUTED VIA AEROFLOT, AND PASSENGERS DEBARKING FROM AEROFLOT IN LIMA AND PROCEEDING TO BA WILL BE TICKETED ON AEROLINEAS.

4. IN THE CASE OF THE PARANA MEDIO HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT THE SOVIETS PUSHED FOR A DEFINITION OF THE STATUS OF THIS PROJECT, FOR WHICH THEY NEGOTIATED A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONTRACT WITH THE PERONIST GOVERNMENT (NEVER RATIFIED BY THE GOA). THE ARGENTINES REFUSED TO COMMIT THEMSELVES, HOWEVER, NOTING INSTEAD THAT A DETERMINATION ON THE VIABILITY OF THIS PROJECT WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL MID-1977 WHEN THE UPDATING OF ARGENTINA'S ELECTRIC POWER PLAN IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETE.

5. THE POSSIBILITY OF SOVIETS PARTICIPATING IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY IN ARGENTINA ALSO DISCUSSED, BUT NOT RESOLVED; PRESS RELEASE ON TALKS INDICATED THAT AGREEMENT WAS REACHED TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE IN THE FUTURE.

6. FINALLY, THE ARGENTINE SIDE EXPRESSED ITS HOPE THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD STEP UP THEIR IMPORTS OF ARGENTINE GOODS (WINE, BEEF AND FRUIT) AND THE SOVIETS NOTED THEIR HOPE THE ARGENTINES WOULD BOOST THEIR PURCHASES OF SOVIET CAPITAL GOODS.

7. COMMENT: EMBASSY UNABLE TO PINPOINT ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT RESULTS. THIS MEETING HAD BEEN POSTPONED A NUMBER OF TIMES AND WAS OVERDUE IN TERMS OF THE SOVIET-ARGENTINE TRADE AGREEMENT. AN ARGENTINE OFFICIAL COMMENTED TO EMBOFF THAT AS GOA HAD NO GOOD EXCUSE FOR NOT HOLDING THE MEETING THEY WENT AHEAD WITH IT AT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BUENOS 07551 172230Z

INSISTENCE OF THE SOVIETS. OUR JUDGEMENT IS, THEREFORE, THAT THE TALKS REPRESENTED AN EFFORT BY THE ARGENTINES TO MAINTAIN CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THIS TRADE LINK WHICH IS QUITE PROFITABLE FOR ARGENTINA. (BALANCE OF TRADE FAVORED ARGENTINA IN 1975 BY SOME US\$ 266 MILLIONS, ON TOTAL BILATERAL TRADE OF US\$ 310. ARGENTINES DID NOT SEEK OR WANT ANY NEW DEPARTURES. THEY APPEAR TO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN THEIR OBJECTIVES.

8. JUDGING FROM THE EXPECTATIONS REFLECTED IN SOVIET DECLARATIONS TO THE PRESS, THE TONE OF THE ACTA AND CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY'S ARGENTINE CONTACTS, THE SOVIETS WERE PROBABLY DISAPPOINTED, HOWEVER. THEY APPEAR TO HAVE PUSHED QUITE HARD FOR MORE CONCRETE RESULTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CIVIL AIR SECTOR, WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS. THE SOVIET UNION REMAINS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN ARGENTINA'S TRADE EQUATION, NEVERTHELESS. IN 1975 THEY WERE THE SECOND LARGEST BUYER OF ARGENTINE PRODUCTS AND RANK 4TH AS OF THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF 1976, FOLLOWING BRAZIL, THE NETHERLANDS AND ITALY.

9. THE SOVIETS CONTINUE TO DEAL PRIVATELY WITH ARGENTINE FIRMS AND TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT PURCHASES HERE, SUCH AS THE 12 MILLION LITER PURCHASE OF WINE IN FEBRUARY OF 1976. A SOVIET PURCHASING COMMISSION WAS IN ARGENTINA AT THE SAME TIME AS THE MIXED COMMISSION MEETINGS WERE TAKING PLACE, REPORTEDLY BARGAINING FOR MEAT, WHEAT AND CORD.
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